



# Lab employee helps veterans find work

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Cody Nevala-Amraen saw his share of “hell on earth” when he deployed to Iraq with the U.S. Marine Corps in 2008. Working in logistics and helping out with explosive ordnance disposal, which put him close to detonations, Nevala-Amraen went through tough times that took their toll on his body and spirit.

Despite the challenges, when Nevala-Amraen left the service in 2010, he lost his “first passion,” the Marines. After bouncing around construction jobs, he decided to go back to school and use his GI Bill benefits to further his educational goals. While earning a bachelor’s degree in business, he still felt a loss of direction and calling—as many veterans do, he says. Then he got the call that turned his life around. A [Wounded Warriors to Work](#) representative asked him, “Would you like to work at Los Alamos?”

“With that call, I got my mission back,” Nevala-Amraen says. “Having that fire relit is amazing.” Now as the lead veteran recruiter in the Diversity and Strategic Staffing group, he’s drawing on his experience and insights to help his fellow veterans get their mission back, too.

“The number one thing for a veteran is to have a purpose, and they can have that here at Los Alamos,” Nevala-Amraen says. “Los Alamos fills that void that’s often overlooked” by giving veterans work that is vitally important to the nation.

## **Staffing up**

The Laboratory recruiting arm is in high gear as it seeks to fill current and anticipated vacancies through retirements, which add up to about 2,500 expected new hires over the next four years. As far as Nevala-Amraen is concerned, veterans are the ideal candidates for many of those jobs, whether or not they know it yet, and it’s his job to find them.

“We have one of the densest populations of veterans—Northern New Mexico is filled with diverse and culturally rich communities that many veterans call home,” Nevala-Amraen says. “Our goal is to give the veterans within these communities an opportunity to highlight the skills they currently possess.”

Nevala-Amraen identifies potential recruits through a combination of networking, employment career fairs, and veterans organizations and advocacy groups such as the U.S. Veterans Administration [Vocational Rehabilitation and Education](#) service and the [Wounded Warrior Project](#).

“I work with officers and enlisted men and women from all backgrounds, all across the country, from infantryman up to nuclear-powered-submarine officers,” he says. “I help them fine-tune their skills and format their resumes, and I talk to them about how their transition is going from the military, about their families, about the challenges they’re facing. Sometimes they just need someone to lean on. And I champion these folks here at the Lab. I’ll actively call a manager and the respective generalist and say, ‘Hey, we have a vet here who meets all your requirements, and I can tell you this about their character and their motivation level.’”

[Read a longer version of this profile here.](#)



Cody Nevala-Amraen

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